

Deer Creek Offers Good Early Sport

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DEER CREEK RESERVOIR — The warm wind kicked up row upon row of tiny whitecaps that glistened like gems in the bright sun, while the gulls swooped and dived, then shuddered and stopped as they rode the air currents.

A crew of fishermen lined the rocky shore, some almost asleep in the heat, and watched through lazy eyes the tips of their fishing rods.

Occasionally — not often, but often enough to keep them there — a rod tip would twitch, then twitch again. The fisherman would watch to make sure it wasn't just the wind, then carefully pick up the pole, tighten the line, and feel for the fish. Then, with a jerk, he would set the hook and begin battling the fish toward shore.

Jump on Season

Now that could be the scene at any one of a thousand fishing spots in Utah, but it was the scene at Deer Creek Reservoir the other day as anglers got the jump on the general fishing season.

Deer Creek, which fills a gorge at the head of the Provo River Canyon, just below Heber City, is open all year, with the stipulation that no boats may be on the lake as long as there is ice.

The ice has long since disappeared under the spring sun, and the fishing is surprisingly good.

Most anglers who fish the reservoir often have their favorite spots, from the place where the Provo River flows in, to the hard-to-reach points on the northwest portion of the lake.

Just a Point

The island — at least it's an island when the reservoir is nearly full — on the east end of the lake is favorite of many anglers. Now, with the water low, it's really a point that juts into the reservoir.

On a visit to the "island" the other day, there were about a dozen anglers trying their luck. It was mid-day, but the action was surprisingly fast for some anglers. Others just couldn't seem to get the right combination.

"I don't know," one angler

said. "I'm fishing right next to him, using the same bait, casting to practically the same spot, and yet he's catching them, and I'm not."

A. D. Case, West Jordan, had a string of six nice trout in the 10-14 inch range. He caught them on cheese molded on a single hook. "The water's still cold, so the cheese stays on fairly well," he said.

Dale Bowthorpe, Provo, was also using cheese on the other side of the island, he wasn't doing bad. He had two fish about 12 inches long, and within a few minutes he landed another perhaps a bit longer.

Six-Fish String

Alex Vigil, Midvale, had a string of six fish, and the anglers beside him had at least that many. "I started catching them on worms, but when I ran out I started using cheese, and it seemed to work just as well."

The big lake will lose much of its draw after June 6, when the general fishing season opens in Utah, but you can bet that before the year is out, the anglers will have whipped the water plenty.

In addition to trout and some really big ones are hauled in every year — the lake has a good population of largemouth bass. Some anglers, mainly the ones who know how to catch bass, are taking them now.

So if you're looking for a spot to work out the kinks in your fishing gear before the general opener, don't pass up Deer Creek. There's a lot of room to fish, and a lot of fish.

Bait is the best — worms, cheese, corn and the like — but some fish have been caught from shore on lures. Trolling with lures and pop gear has been producing, as well as still fishing from an anchored boat.

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